

# **CITY OF ROCKVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

## **HISTORIC DESIGNATION EVALUATION**

### **STAFF ANALYSIS**

**April 10, 2001**

**MEETING NO.: 4-01**

**SUBJECT:** 525 Anderson Avenue

**MEETING DATE:** 3/20/01, continued to 4/17/01

**OWNER:** Mahmoud Amin and Fakhri B. Vaziri.



**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends that 525 Anderson Avenue be found eligible for designation as a contributing resource in a historic district, but that the site at 525 Anderson Avenue does not meet the criteria for designation as a single site Rockville Historic District in accordance with the adopted criteria, attachment A.

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### **BACKGROUND**

525 Anderson Avenue is located in the City of Rockville in West End Park. The property was purchased by Gordon and Leona Bailey in 1935 and they built the house at 525 Anderson soon after. The Bailey family owned the property until it was sold due to health and relocation issues. The house appeared to be an intact example of a 1930s colonial revival-style house, over 50 years old, and had been under one ownership for over 60 years. Therefore, the site was referred by the Preservation staff to the Historic District Commission for evaluation to determine architectural, cultural or historical significance to the City of Rockville in accordance with the requirements of the adopted City of Rockville Environmental Guidelines. If the HDC finds that the property meets the criteria for historic designation, it will submit that recommendation to the Mayor and Council.

### **EVALUATION PROCESS**

Notices of the HDC evaluation were sent via first class mail to owners of record located within ¼ mile of the property, nearby Citizen's Associations, and other interested parties on March 15, 2001. The agenda for the evaluation meeting was also posted on the city's web page.

Summaries of comments submitted on 525 Anderson Avenue at this hearing:

Jennifer Katz and David Kaye, 100 Forest Avenue, asked if the property's significance was established. Acting Chair Moloney said that was to be determined in this process and comments are welcome.

Karen Buscemi, 100 Lynch Street, decried the trend to tear down the original smaller homes and build houses that are much larger than neighboring structures.

Killian O'Donnell, 18 Forest Avenue, said that she favored preserving the character of Rockville's older neighborhoods and that any house built on the site should be compatible.

John Olington, 508 Beall Avenue, observed that 525 Anderson squarely represented the "typical Rockville" house of the 1930s.

Eric Jensen, 529 Anderson, asked if both the interior and exterior was affected. He was informed that the HDC only has jurisdiction on the exterior.

Kevin Davidson, 532 Anderson, inquired about the design of the replacement home. Mr. Amin did not have the information available.

Anthony Buscemi, 100 Lynch Street, asked about the criteria used to evaluate the property for historic designation.

Ann Baur, 537 Anderson, said that Mrs. Bailey was the oldest living member of Rockville Presbyterian Church. She was an independent woman who lived by herself and kept her property and garden up by herself until four years ago. She termed her "a remarkable woman."

Jack Baur, 537 Anderson, referred to an article on Mrs. Bailey in the Rockville Gazette about 5 years ago. He related that she drove her car, painted her garage and maintained a vegetable garden until 5 years ago. He said the house was significant and should continue to stand. He asked if similar houses are found elsewhere in Rockville.

Ron Meek, 522 Anderson, said he lived across the street from the subject property and had read through the criteria without finding any that would make this property significant.

A letter was submitted to the record in support of the nomination and in appreciation of Mrs. Bailey from Betsy and Jack Kelly. The Kellys stated that if the house could not be reused, they would prefer a house in keeping with the neighborhood. A letter was also submitted from Gordon and Sandra Lamb, 105 Beall, disputing the allegations included in the neighborhood flyer about the Amin's project and previous work, saying that Mr. Amin's house would be a welcome addition to the neighborhood.

Commissioner Rodgers requested that staff provide more information on the Bailey family, as there was not enough information to make a decision on the association with persons.

The record closed on April 2, 2001 at the close of business. Prior to the record closing, A letter was received from John and Grace Mullineaux of 510 Anderson Avenue stating that it is not right to stop the building of a new house at 525 Anderson as the property is large enough to accommodate it. Also prior to the closing of the record, Sheila Dillon, daughter of Howard Bailey, submitted Bailey Family information via email. The material was incorporated as an addendum to the consultant's report on 525 Anderson and is repeated below:

Bailey Family History provided by Sheila Bailey Dillon  
March, 2001

The house at 525 Anderson was built in 1935 by Gordon and Leona Bailey. The liens were removed and the mortgage paid off in 1937. The stucco siding is original and so are the upstairs windows while the lower windows are replacements.

Gordon Bailey and Leona Alpha Schaeffer left northern Virginia to come to Rockville to marry, according to family history and grandmother's (Leona Bailey's) confirmation to me ten years ago. They eloped and ran away from home. Grandad Gordon Bailey got a job with the Esso Co. (now Exxon gasoline and oil) distributor and over the years also managed several stations. He worked at the ABC (Alcoholic Beverage Commission) Board and during the last 12 years of his life, he worked for the Public Health Institute in Bethesda as a machinist and Instrument maker. Grandad was born in 1891 and died 3 months before his 60th birthday of a cerebral hemorrhage.

Leona was a seamstress for Woodward and Lothrop Department Store and still receives a pension. She is the oldest living member of Rockville Presbyterian Church, which she attended since 1915 when she and Gordon came to Rockville to be married. She was born November 6, 1898, and was known for her lovely gardens and flower beds. The tree removed in the front was a mature tree when they built the home in 1935.

Gordon and Leona Bailey had three children: Howard, David G. (80), who resides in Daytona Beach Florida, and a daughter, Mildred, born two years after David. Mildred died of cancer in 1990 in her home in Albuquerque New Mexico. Her husband, Colonel Arthur Beall (retired), preceded her in death. Mr. Beall's family was also from the Northern Virginia area. Mildred and Arthur had three children.

Howard married Betty Jane Perdue on June 2, 1950. They met at Chestnut Lodge where she was doing nursing training. Ms. Perdue was from Bluefield, West Virginia, and after living one year in Twinbrook, they moved to West Virginia. Howard returned to Rockville in 1993 to live with his mother and eventually worked part time for the City of Rockville, then full time. Like his father, Howard experienced a massive cerebral hemorrhage in June of 2000, but survived the stroke. He was on duty at City Hall at the time of the incident and received emergency medical assistance immediately. Howard has three daughters and presently resides close to them in Huntersville, North Carolina, where he moved for rehabilitation. At that time his mother, Leona (102), moved to North Carolina with him to join the rest of the family.

## CRITERIA AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Historic and Cultural Significance*

Criteria:

- Has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the **City**
- Has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the **County**
- Has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the **State**
- Has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the **Nation**
- Is the site of a significant historic event
- Is identified with a person or a group of persons who influenced society
- Exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historic heritage of the County and its communities

### *Architectural and Design Significance*

Criteria:

- Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction
- Represents the work of a master
- Possesses high artistic values
- Represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction, or
- Represents an established or familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.

### *Historic and Cultural Significance:*

The house is a modest example of a type of 1930s housing that is common to Rockville, Montgomery County, and surrounding areas. Its significance, if any, would be to the City. Although Gordon and Leona Bailey built the property, neither of them has been shown to influence society, nor were they major participants in city government, local politics, or in civic affairs. A significance historic event has not been shown to occur at the site. It is therefore staff's conclusion that the property at 525 Anderson Avenue is not identified with a person or group of persons who influenced society, nor is it the site of a significant historic event, nor does it exemplify the cultural, economic, social, political or historic heritage of the County or City.

### *Architectural and Design Significance:*

The house is an example of a vernacular colonial-revival style house that gained popularity in the 1920s and has endured to the present. The original form and setting are largely unaltered, but the house itself does not possess design significance. It does embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. Numerous examples of this type of vernacular

residential construction can be found in Rockville and in the county. There is a mix of original and replacement windows.

The house does not represent the work of a master. It is a vernacular example of construction and was likely assembled from a mail order kit or built by a local builder.

The house does not possess high artistic value. It is a modest and common variety of its type.

The house does not represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

It does not represent an established or visual feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.

It is the conclusion of staff that the property at 525 Anderson Avenue is not identified with a person or group of persons who influenced society, nor is it the site of a significant historic event. Although the structure is a recognizable example of a typical 1930's Colonial Revival style house, it is not unique to the City and not sufficient to render the site significant to the City. In addition, a single site historic district requires that several of the designation criteria be met, unlike a multiple site district, which does include typical examples of less significance as contributing resources. The property at 525 Anderson would definitely be eligible as a contributing resource in a historic district, but does not meet the more stringent criteria necessary for designation as a single site.

Staff therefore recommends that the house and property at 525 Anderson be found not eligible for designation as a single site historic district based on applicable cited criteria and findings.

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